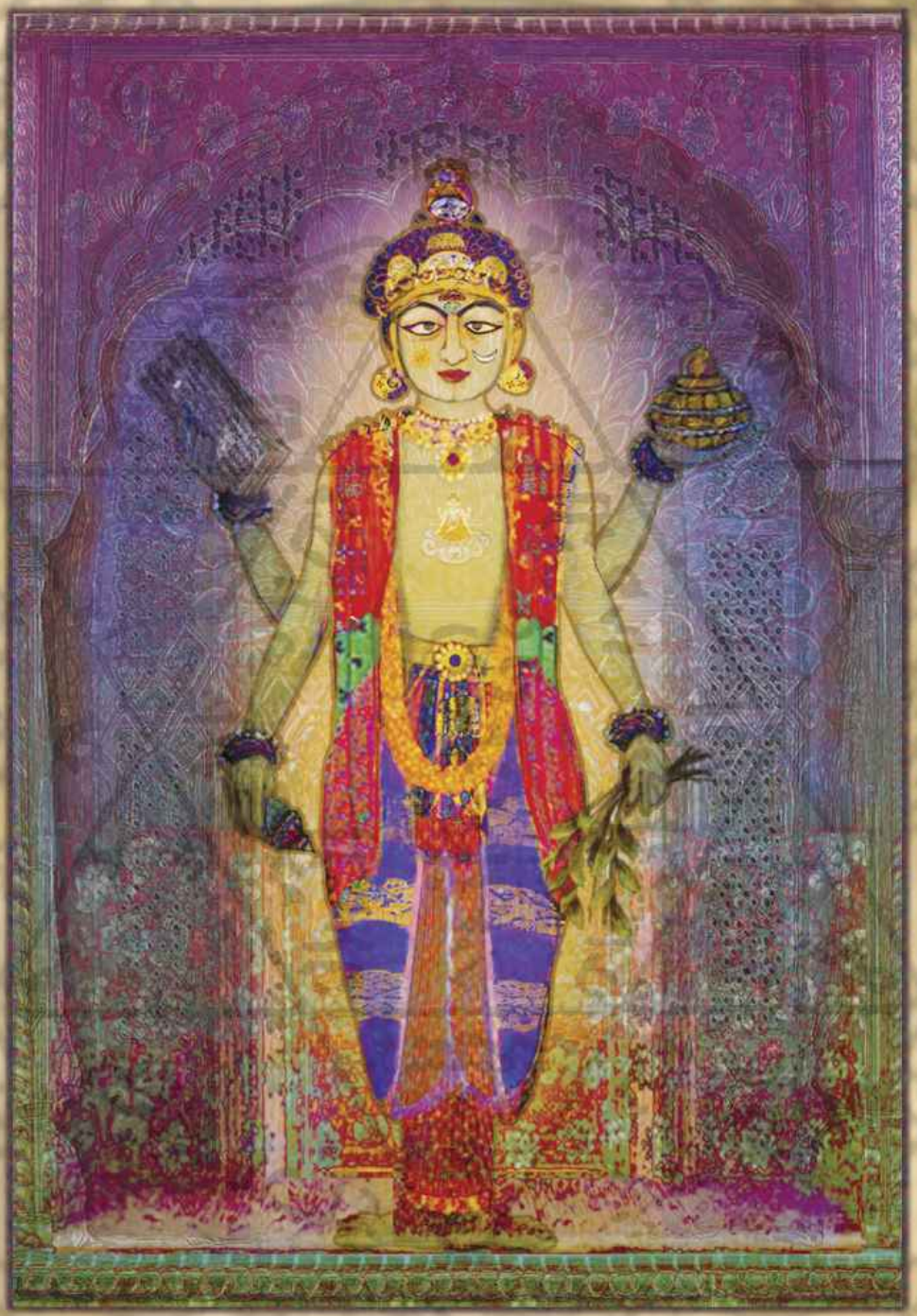
The Hidden Secret *of* Ayurveda



Robert E. Svoboda, B.A.M.S.

THE HIDDEN SECRET OF AYURVEDA

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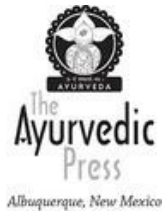

Dedication

To Mother:

You created me in your image, full of love and intelligence, and this has enabled me to be successful in the realm of the endless age-old knowledge of Ayurveda; and your grace will enable me to serve humanity by alleviating their miseries.

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Profound thanks to Vimalananada.

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Although the information contained in this book is based on Ayurvedic principles practiced for thousands of years, it should not be taken or construed as standard medical treatment. For any medical condition, always consult with a qualified health practitioner.

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Preface

Indian culture is very different from the culture of the West, but because I found during my many sojourns in India since 1973, and particularly during the six years I spent in medical school in Pune, that these differences are not unbridgeable, I determined to try to bridge a few of them by writing a book on Ayurveda, my subject of study. When I graduated from the Tilak Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya with a degree in Ayurvedic medicine in 1980, books in English on Ayurveda were difficult to obtain, and those which were obtainable were difficult for Westerners to follow. Being a Westerner who was fortunate enough to have acquired this knowledge first-hand in India, I wanted to help expose the average Western reader to Ayurveda, and so I set out to make the book as simple as possible. I omitted as many foreign words as I could without sacrificing what I felt was the substance of the teachings, and used Sanskrit words only when it was impossible to convey their meanings through English equivalents. I strove for clarity and simplicity, and I hope that the basic concepts of Ayurveda still shine through to illuminate these pages without obstruction. My hope now, as it was then, is that this short book will instill in those readers who have only begun to dip their toes into Ayurvedic waters the desire and motivation to pursue further study in this most ancient of all sciences of life.

Foreword

Ayurveda is a Sanskrit word which means the "Knowledge of Life." Its roots are buried deeply in the ancient culture of India. In fact, Ayurvedic medicine is considered to be the oldest natural healing system extant, pre-dating even the Chinese system of medicine. Ayurveda is more than a medical science, however, and can only be understood when one realizes that it is intricately woven into the fabric of Nature. Over five thousand years ago, spiritually enlightened persons known as Rishis or Seers, by close observation of Nature and its relationship to Man through a supramental state of meditation, imparted that truth from guru to disciple. Today, however, Ayurveda exists in texts, scribed in the form of melodious poetry. Because the roots of Ayurveda were born out of the realm of the Spirit, only with a spiritual orientation can one understand this knowledge.

Herein is contained not only explanations of some of the ways that Ayurveda diagnoses, treats disease, and maintains and ensures good health, but in addition this knowledge contains the secrets of why people need to cooperate with Nature completely in order to ensure their well- being. When there is little or no cooperation, the resultant disharmony is suffering, disease and finally a premature death. Thus, in dealing with the body in the context of the spirit, Ayurveda is a completely Holistic approach to life.

This science concerns itself with the relationship of the internal (the individual) to the external (world) conditions, and their effect on the production and loss of equilibrium upon one another. Ayurveda, in fact, embraces the "whole person" in body, mind and soul in relationship to the mysterious workings of the Cosmos. The seasons of the year, the time of day, and also a person's physical structure and activities, i.e., the way he or she walks, breathes, sits, eats, thinks, all stand in direct relationship to the individual's life, for these fundamental elements are interrelated in Man and the Universe. Thus, Ayurveda is an all-encompassing science which combines scientific facts and profound empirical observation of Man and his connection to the Cosmos through the basic elements which are found in all life-substances. These substances in Nature, according to Ayurveda, are considered to have healing qualities, and are used to treat the disordered life- principles, which cause disharmony and result in disease. In addition, Ayurvedic medicines being all natural substances, have no side effects when properly administered, making them perfectly safe.

The loss of harmony in people today is directly reflected in the disharmony of their physical world. Further evidence exists in the rapidly decaying quality and increased scarcity of substances necessary to ensure life on Earth. As a result, it is being predicted by many in the scientific community as well as by highly respected spiritual and psychic persons that if the present trend of this wanton abuse is not reversed now, a holocaust, the likes of which will threaten all life on this planet, is inevitable. Ayurveda has suggested that a change in the consciousness of one individual, either positive or negative, influences the consciousness of all humanity. Thus, it is the responsibility of every human being to allow a radical change in his consciousness in order to bring about transformation in the Universe.

Since Ayurveda adheres strictly to Nature's Law, and Nature's Law has ruled over the Universe even before the Earth took shape, Man can ensure survival on spaceship Earth by following life-principles rooted in Nature's Law. These principles are contained in various healing systems such as

Homeopathy and Polarity Therapy, which have their roots in Ayurveda. Like Ayurveda, they utilize the various Laws of Nature in relationship to their effect on the symptoms, constitution, attitudes, living habits, etc., of the individual receiving treatment.

Every healing system has its own limitations since it does not work for everyone who seeks out relief from sickness and disease. Whether a system be primarily of diet, massage, herbs or the combination thereof, even the broadest holistic healing system generalizes to some extent about individualized treatment. Ayurveda, having no standard therapy, only reflects and reacts to what naturally occurs in Nature. Thus, its only limitation is the limitation of the physician. Ayurveda looks at a person completely in relation to his environment, and treats each individual as indivisible. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that one person's food is another's poison. It is for the physician, who is armed with the widest perspective of life's interaction with its elements, to understand and appreciate that dynamic dance, and to offer the most effective treatment to allow the body to heal itself. Ayurveda exists only to provide the healer with the broadest framework available to bring about individual balance, harmony and health.

Balance, or the Yin/Yang principle in life, must be an integral part of our consciousness; Ayurveda has fostered that truth from its beginning thousands of years ago. Unfortunately, this indigenous healing system has remained in the womb of Mother India for over 5000 years due, in part, to the fact that its texts are still in the original Sanskrit. The West, as a result, has been conspicuously deprived of this wisdom to date. However, as evidenced in this book, Dr. Svoboda has demonstrated the ability to translate and simplify the sometimes difficult and unfamiliar concepts contained in Ayurveda. This will make possible the revelations of the deeper meanings of this highly evolved body of knowledge. I am sure his future efforts will continue in the same vein, and this jewel of the East will eventually be admired by the West. As the world has shrunken steadily in recent decades, the two hemispheres of East and West have drawn closer, and each is giving the other more of its richness; this is as it should be at the dawn of the Aquarian Age. Let us share together this ambrosia as you turn the page to walk on.

Dr. Vasant D. Lad
Pune, India
March, 1980

Chapter 1 ~ Introduction and History

Longevity and Immortality

Although the word "Ayurveda" is often translated as "the knowledge of life," a more accurate translation is "the knowledge of longevity." The cherished goal of all ages has been the conquest of death. The desire to stay alive as long as possible is as fundamental to human nature as is its cause: the profound fear of death which lurks in the heart of every living being as the root reason for all other fears. Thousands of years ago the Rishis of India addressed the problem of eternal life, writing their answers to this conundrum in the four Vedas, the collections of hymns which are the oldest existing literary compositions of the human race. The word "veda" is derived from a Sanskrit root meaning "knowledge," and the Vedas are verily the seeds of universal knowledge which have bloomed into Indian culture.

A famous Vedic prayer states: "Lead me from darkness into light; lead me from untruth into truth; lead me from mortality into immortality." We lay emphasis on the last clause of this prayer in our study of medicine, for Ayurveda's purpose is the systematic transformation of a mortal human into an immortal being. Because students must be freed from disease before they can adequately extract knowledge from the Vedas and employ that knowledge in their own lives in their quest for immortality, Ayurveda was established as an auxiliary to these Vedas. In fact, Ayurveda as it now exists is a collection of the by-products of ancient researches into the elixir of immortality. This ultimate aim of Ayurveda deserves emphasis, for doubts about it exist even in India.

Because everything which is created must be destroyed, since it exists in time, the aim of immortality is to go beyond time. Some Westerners try to cheat death by freezing themselves, but this is mere self-delusion, for true immortality results only when the whole individual body, mind and spirit, is wholly transformed. There is no use of eternal life if, like that of Tantalus or Sisyphus, or of the characters in Sartre's *No Exit*, it is a life of misery and unfillable desires.

The Importance of Being Individual

The message of the Vedas is simple: in every aspect of life, including health, carve out your own niche. Everyone may not choose to aspire to immortality, but everyone does suffer from disease at one time or another during life. Because every human is born an individual, with individual peculiarities and idiosyncrasies, every human requires individualized treatment. The Seers therefore provided "The Knowledge of Longevity" with therapies which can be adapted to fit anyone's requirements, beginning with Ayurveda and continuing through Yoga to Tantra and beyond. In a world made for the masses there is little place for the individual, which underlines the urgency of Ayurveda's message. Since every person is a unique manifestation of the Creative Energy of the universe, every physician must approach his or her patients with due reverence for the fragment of the Universal Soul which dwells within them.

The complex of body, mind and spirit which constitutes the human being is indivisible until death; life cannot exist if one of these three constituents is absent. Treatment usually focuses on one of these three aspects, however, especially when a malady manifests more pronouncedly in one of them. Ayurveda is that division of the Healing Art which concentrates on the physical body; Yoga uses the

spirit to work through ailments; and the domain of Tantra, and those disciplines like Aghora which are beyond Tantra, is the mind. These sciences are not independent of one another; they are one, but their knowledge materializes differently. Which mode of treatment to select for any individual depends on a number of factors, of which the most important is the doctor's capability.

Ayurveda deals with every individual, patient or doctor, on an "as is, where is" basis. The wisdom of Ayurveda waits patiently for a talented student to come and tap into it. Even a dullard who memorizes the texts and sincerely follows their teachings will cure most patients, though he will be handicapped by the boundaries of his knowledge. A good scholar who has learned the texts will use them as a guide, and will experiment with the therapies she has been taught. Both approaches, of tradition and of innovation, are useful and effective in their own ways. Ayurveda embraces such a wide range of therapies that a doctor may develop one until it is almost a complete system on its own. Nothing is obligatory; aspirants are limited only by their own limitations.

An expert physician can use his knowledge of Ayurveda to develop new products from herbs which have quite different traditional uses. For example, one doctor developed a male contraceptive from vidanga (*Embelia ribes*), an herb which has been used for centuries as a vermifuge. It actually prevents reproduction in worms, which was the rationale behind using it to prevent the production of sperms. The World Health Organization has done trials of this drug, and a female contraceptive has been prepared from the same plant.

The Tree of Knowledge may seem formidable with its many branches and myriad leaves, and in fact only the Rishis can explore it completely, but there is no need to become discouraged and conclude that it is hopeless to make any effort to climb it. Each branch of the Tree is laden with nectar-filled fruit waiting to be plucked and digested. If you only want to learn the basic principles and follow them to enjoy a long and happy life, well and good, and if you want to go further, there are always more branches above.

Meat-eater or vegetarian, mountaineer or flatlander, priest or pariah, every patient can find a convenient therapy, one which satisfies his or her needs, within Ayurveda. That enema which is meant for a king must be milder than that intended for someone who has become habituated to a rough outdoor life. The lists of hundreds of emetics, purgatives and tonics in the texts permit the physician to choose that one which is best-suited to the patient's constitution, and which is easily available in the season in which it is required. The dozens of Ayurvedic methods for preparing medications are specific for specific conditions or for particular body parts, and allow for variations in the patient's ability to assimilate the remedy. Because Ayurveda is so uniformly holistic, the Western idea of a "therapy of choice," a regimen which should always be employed whenever a certain criterion is met, cannot often be reconciled with the relativity which Ayurveda espouses. No problem has a final solution, because nothing in the universe is absolute and no knowledge is final.

The Roots of the Holistic Viewpoint

Everything in the universe interacts with every other thing, and there is no event however trifling which does not affect every individual, however slightly. It is therefore impossible to divorce an individual from his or her background. The body-mind-spirit complexes of both patient and physician, which are independent and particular, must find a way in which to relate to one another, a way which is appropriate to the society in which they live, for healing to transpire. Good treatment must therefore be simultaneously holistic and individual, for it must take into account all the various forces both internal and external which act upon the patient, the physician, and their relationship. Success in treatment being the return of a living organism to balance vis-a- vis its surrounding

environment, true treatment must be performed in the context of that environment. Just as no physicist can make an observation without altering the system thus observed, every interaction between a patient and a physician alters the relationship between the patient and his or her disease. Every physician must therefore apply maximum curative energy at all times.

Ayurvedic texts clearly state that no physician since the beginning of time has ever cured even the simplest disease, because all therapeutic efforts only expedite Nature's processes. All diseases are created, and since everything created exists in time and must eventually be destroyed, the seeds of a disease's destruction are present even at the moment of its origin. Even though the end of the disease sometimes coincides with the end of the patient, no disease is permanent. All a good doctor can do is to hasten the process of healing. An incompetent, heroic or over- enthusiastic doctor may hasten the death of the patient more often than he or she hastens the death of the disease. A good musician can make melody with a defective instrument, and a good doctor can create harmony from malady.

Since Ayurveda developed at a time when no giant computers existed to help evaluate the total net effect of any given group of stimuli and propose a course of action, doctors back then had no choice but to rely on Nature and Her gift of intuition. Any physician who hopes to become versed in Ayurveda must therefore develop a deep intuitive understanding of the workings of Nature. The closer your life's rhythm synchronizes with Nature's continuous rhythmic flux, the greater will be your comprehension of healing and health. This reliance on intuition prevents Ayurvedic medicine from being easily quantifiable or reducible into symbols, and prevents its results from being easily reproducible in the laboratory, which sometimes leads Western-trained scientists to doubt its credentials as a science.

The strong analytical bias inculcated into most modern scientists during their training tends to make it difficult for them to relate to a continuous or dynamic science in which a practitioner must evaluate each case intuitively. The notion of a Healing Art seems equally unscientific to those who believe that "art" must always be impractical and imaginary. Cookery is a practical art, and just because you follow a recipe with strict attention to accuracy is no guarantee that the end product will be edible; success with a souffle is only possible for those whose hands are "set" in cooking. Likewise, Ayurvedic treatment succeeds only for those physicians who possess a good "feel" for their craft.

Disease and Remedy

Ayurveda existed long before Jesus, before Buddha and before Krishna, long, long ago when humans were very primitive and had to live close to Nature because they had no other alternative. While they probably could not have expressed it in so many words, the ancients would surely have defined disease in the same way that the Ayurvedic texts now define it: ill-health is the state of disharmony of the individual with regard to his or her external environment, and medicine is the means by which this harmony is restored. Early humans were generally helpless to control their physical environment, and when they were ill all they could do was look around themselves and try to locate a remedy in Nature. Primitive people were more intuitive than we moderns are, and because of their proximity to Nature many early humans could intuitively determine the likely effects of the ingestion of any particular plant. Also, sometimes someone would notice a monkey or an elephant eating a plant which it would not normally eat, and that plant would be noted for future reference.

Such observations, collected over thousands of years, finally developed into Ayurveda when experts like Charaka, the author of the famous text known as the Charaka Samhita, codified them into systems. Charaka means "wanderer," and Charaka must himself have spent many months in the jungles

watching the behavior of wild animals in order to have gained the vast cache of wisdom which is his treatise. Primitive men and women may never have suspected that such systematic codification would happen, for they knew only that a certain bark, root, leaf, flower or fruit would return them to health when they were ill.

My mentor Vimalananda received a practical demonstration of this principle during the days when he wandered as a naked mendicant in the Gir Forest of Western India. One day he had a high fever, and the wild monkey who had become his pet sensed that something was wrong and tried to catch his attention. He was in such a state that he pushed her away by threatening her with a stick, something he would never have done in normal consciousness. She backed away, and he fell into an exhausted sleep. While he was dozing the monkey went into the forest and located a certain tree. She collected a few leaves and, chewing them into a paste, returned to Vimalananda and thrust the paste into his sleeping mouth. The intense bitterness woke him and although he spit most of it out he swallowed enough so that his fever broke by the next morning. Then he realized his mistake, and apologized to his monkey for having failed to understand her.

Hanuman

Chapter 2 ~ The Three Principles or Doshas

The Universal Elements...

Over centuries and millennia the primitive, intuitive knowledge of medicine became progressively cognized verbally, and finally the Rishis made an effort to systematize all the collected lore. One result of this effort was the production of a group of axioms which express the basic harmony of the universe as it appears on various levels of existence. The first and most fundamental axiom is that *everything that exists in the external universe has its counterpart in the internal universe of the human body*. Every natural force and object—sun, moon, stars, planets, wind, rain, fire, earth, space—is present in the body, in a slightly modified form. This is the Law of the Macrocosm and Microcosm, which explains why even the most insignificant of disturbances in the external cosmos will induce a like disturbance internally.

The physical universe is made up of the infinite patterns of the permutations and combinations of the Five Great Elements: Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Ether. Increase in an Element externally increases its internal twin, and external decrease likewise decreases the internal: macrocosm and microcosm. Each Element contains the other four Elements within itself, but in lesser proportion, so that the Elements are distinguished according to the general rule that an item is named according to a quality or component which is in excess. These Five Elements are thus neither discrete nor individually objectifiable. Earth is known to be present in excess by the solidity present in any object, be it mountain or diamond in the external universe, or bone, beard or other hard parts internally. Without, Air is the movement of wind; within, it is the originator and controller of body movements and sensations. Ether is empty space, or it is space that can be filled, which is organized in the body into systems of gross and subtle vessels.

A beautiful story illustrates this ordering of the cosmos: A Rishi was sitting in deep meditation in the wee hours of the morning. In the half-light just before the break of dawn he realized that all exists in space, that space is the field, the background of the play of life. He named the space Ether, since it possesses no physical substance.

As dawn broke the leaves of the trees began to rustle, and the birds began to sleepily chirp. He then named the force which governs motion Air, which is the most subtle of natural forces: though invisible, it induces change in the visible.

The first rays of the rising sun reminded him of the sacrificial fire which he tended, and so he cognized the Fire Element, the sole principle of heat in the manifested universe, the source of all heat on our earth. As the daylight increased in intensity and the Rishi perceived the details of the landscape around him, he differentiated Water from Earth, thus completing the Five Elements. The origin of these Elements is the Great Undifferentiated Existence from whence all issues, and nothing exists in the physical universe which is not composed of these Five Elements.

And Their Bodily Counterparts

When the Rishis began to think in this way they applied their practical knowledge of healing to the first axiom and discovered the second axiom: *Air, Fire and Water are the three principles most fundamental to life.* Here they took Air to include both the Air and Ether Elements, Fire to include

both the Fire and Water Element, and Water to represent both the Water and Earth Elements. The Rishis used this Doctrine of the Three Principles, (in Sanskrit, the three *doshas*) to establish a healing science which could exist and work in congruence with Nature's Law, and which would be broad enough to include all connections of human with cosmos. This is Ayurveda's holism, or wholism, the consciousness of the interrelation of all the universal principles.

Air, Fire and Water are termed *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* respectively in Sanskrit. Some authors translate these terms as "wind, bile and phlegm," but this excessively emphasizes their physical counterparts, and recalls to mind Galenic medicine, which might invite invidious comparison. We could also call vata, pitta and kapha the "catabolic, metabolic, and anabolic principles" respectively, but this would be cumbersome. We have therefore left them in Sanskrit.

The Three Principles of Ayurveda are the physical expressions of the Three Universal Tendencies or *gunas* of the cosmos: inertia (*tamas*), excitability (*rajas*), and equilibrium (*sattva*). Excitability on the physical level is vata, equilibrium is pitta, and inertia is kapha. These Great Tendencies act as the Three Principles which control the health of the mind, analogous to the body's vata, pitta and kapha. The mind is said to be healthy when it is full of sattva or mental equilibrium, and to be diseased when it is filled with rajas or tamas and therefore either excessively over- or underactive.

In the body vata represents all the *forces* which cause the body to move and act, and all the *sensations* which induce these actions. In general, vata collects in excess in the lungs and heart, the colon, the bones and joints, the genitals, and the nervous system. Pitta, the body's principle of *heat*, is concentrated in the digestive ferments, the eyes, the liver and spleen, the skin, the small intestine and the brain. The cold principle, kapha, encompasses synovial fluid, cerebrospinal fluid, phlegm, mucus, saliva and other lubricants. Of course these principles are not independent of one another; they always act in concert in the healthy body. For example, the movement of food through the gastro-intestinal tract is governed by vata, pitta regulates the secretion of digestive ferments and enzymes, and the lubricating mucus is provided by kapha.

A car provides us a good analogy of the functioning of the physical body. We must rely on sensors to know how well an automobile engine is running. Just as the gauges on the dashboard inform us when something has gone wrong and readjustment or repair is necessary, the radial pulse in the wrist at the root of the thumb provides a way for the physician to monitor the state of vata, pitta and kapha in the body. The physician's index finger is placed closest to the thumb of the patient and measures vata; the middle finger and the ring finger then measure pitta and kapha respectively. To stretch this analogy a bit further, the oil which lubricates the engine is comparable to kapha, which lubricates the body; the engine's combustion, which both releases energy to do work and creates waste heat, is related to pitta; and the car's electrical systems, which stimulate the engine to work, can be compared to the body's nervous system, which is ruled by vata.

Although it is not possible to see or otherwise directly perceive vata, pitta and kapha, their effects on the body can be perceived. An expert physicist can identify a sub-atomic particle and estimate its angular momentum, direction or fate from the track it deposits in a collection chamber, for the tracks of particles remain even after the particles have passed through. Likewise, the movements of vata, pitta and kapha in the body leave tracings in the pulse which can be read with ease by an experienced clinician.

Matter or Energy?

The Three Principles do not remain in static states within the body. They are dynamic,

continuously changing with changes in the environment. It is best to consider vata, pitta and kapha as tendencies or directions of body metabolism, tendencies which increase or decrease in influence with every external or internal disturbance to their equilibrium. Because these Principles are perpetually moving, the motion of the pulse is a good measure of their motion. The qualities of the pulse—its rhythm, fullness, intensity, and the like—vary according to the condition of the organism, and Ayurveda has described 108 different pulse patterns formed by permutations in the rhythms of the Three Principles. Rather than attempt to express their observations in dry objective terminology the Rishis described the pulse in terms of the movements of various animals commonly found in India's jungles and forests. Students could then compare the gaits of various pulses with the gaits of these animals, and interpret the effects of each pulse via the traits of its animal namesake. The Frog Pulse, for example, jumps high and cleanly, just like the amphibian.

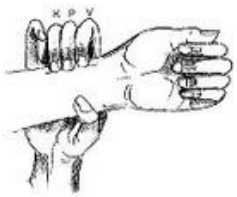
Sensitive fingers, strong intuition and a clear, quiet mind are essential to success at diagnosis by pulse. This does not come easily to modern students who, to the detriment of their internal faculties, have allowed themselves to become reliant on external gadgets. Ayurveda requires a strong intuition, and sometimes it is necessary to forget much of what one has learned in order to remember how to be intuitive. An ancient author writes, *"The physician should enter the heart of the patient with the light of perception and knowledge of Ayurveda in order to diagnose the disease; then alone is cure possible."*

The Human Constitution

Day-to-day changes in the external environment do affect the vata-pitta-kapha equilibrium, but there is a strong internal influence on this equilibrium as well: the *prakriti*, or constitution. A person's constitution is a natural pattern of increase or decrease in the Three Principles which is innate and basic to the individual. It never changes throughout life because it is innate, caused by the relative imbalance of the Three Principles in the bodies of that individual's parents at the moment of conception.

When you know your constitution you can predict the diseases to which you are likely to be susceptible, and you can determine what regime to follow in order to prevent them. If kapha predominates, for instance, there will be a tendency for diseases due to excess of kapha, such as the common cold, to develop. A temporary excess of pitta in a person of kapha constitution is not necessarily significant, because pitta and kapha are antagonistic to one another, and the permanent influence of kapha in the constitution would automatically help reduce the temporarily aggravated pitta. An increased pitta, though, in one whose constitution is fiery is likely to prove more difficult to treat, since the constitution will be supporting the disease, making a return to balance more difficult.

A chart in the appendix lists the main criteria used in determining constitution. Further information on constitution and its implications for health and disease can be found in my book *Prakruti: Your Ayurvedic Constitution.*



Radial Pulse Analysis

Chapter 3 ~ Factors Affecting the Harmony of the Three Principles

Time

Disease is disharmony of vata, pitta and kapha, and is usually due to increase in one of more of them. An external increase in one of the Principles enhances the power of that Principle inside the body, according to the third axiom: *like increases like.* Of all the internal and external factors which can cause the Three Principles to increase, the most important is time. The body has its own inner clock which is set into motion at the moment of conception and ticks away inexorably until its dying day. This inner clock must stay synchronized with the outer clock of the cosmos, whose various cycles encompass periods in which the vata, pitta or kapha of the external universe increase and decrease. Among the significant time cycles in our lives are the time of day, seasonal time, age, and celestial time.

Time of Day

At dawn and dusk the vata in the external environment increases both in quality and quantity. Pitta increases at mid-day and mid-night, and kapha predominates in the early morning and early evening. Vata, pitta and kapha in the internal environment of the body increase accordingly. This is why someone who has a peptic ulcer may be awakened by pain in the middle of the night. Pitta is naturally stronger then, and it is pitta in the form of stomach acid which causes the disease. Mucus congestion in the body is often worst in the early morning, when kapha, which governs mucus, is strongest, and it is most natural to defecate in the pre-dawn hours when vata, which is responsible for all excretory activity, predominates.

It is impossible to overemphasize the dynamic nature of the Three Principles, especially since the terms vata, pitta and kapha are so inadequate to express the reality that they are intended to represent. When we say that kapha increases in the early morning hours what we mean is that during the cool of the night there is a tendency for the force of kapha to accumulate in the system. Mucus itself may not accumulate at that time, but the force which causes the mucus to manifest is strengthened by the coolness. The morning sun "liquefies" the collected kapha and causes it to flow. This "flow" of the kapha principle, which alters the dynamic equilibrium of kapha, pitta and vata, is part of the normal daily morning life process. If the quality or quantity of kapha is abnormal, the flow may be excessive, deficient, misdirected, or blocked, and this may cause an imbalance or illness.

At mid-day the sun "heats" the body, pouring into it the force of pitta. Pitta also dries the body, and during the afternoon the force of wind (a quality of vata) "dries" it further. At nightfall the force of kapha flows into the body again, and the cycle repeats itself. Nothing is static; there is continuous give and take among the Three Principles and the forces which interact with them and induce them to change. This is why we always speak of the Three Principles as having both direction and gait, which they exhibit during pulse examination.

Seasonal Time

India is often said to have six seasons: spring, summer, rains, autumn, early winter, and late winter. Vata tends to become vitiated during the rainy season, pitta during the summer, and kapha during spring. Just as kapha accumulates each night and is discharged the following morning, each winter kapha accumulates, like snow on the mountain tops, and then "melts" in spring. The principle is the same in America and Europe where there are but four seasons: kapha pre- dominates in the spring, pitta in the summer, and vata in the autumn. The influence of the seasons varies substantially according to the particular climate of the locale, of course. In arid areas vata predominates, in torrid regions pitta is strongest, and kapha prevails in humid climes. In temperate zones the Three Principles tend to be more balanced, except in those places where the weather is totally unpredictable, where vata, whose signal attribute is changeability, is usually most influential.

Age

Growth of both body and mind is the adaptation by digestion of external materials to equip them for action in the internal universe. During childhood there is a net intake of external matter so that growth can occur. Kapha, the principle of anabolism, thus governs childhood. Pitta rules metabolism in general, the balance of intake and outflow. There is no cessation of flow between within and without; the exchange of nutrients and excrements is ceaseless. Once adulthood has been reached, after all growth is over, there is no further increase in physique (or, often, intellect) because of pitta's dominance. In old age there is a gradual emaciation of the body and deterioration of the mind, a diminution of their powers which is caused by a net outflow of mass and energy from the interior to the exterior. After menopause in women, and after age fifty or thereabouts in men, vata, the principle of catabolism, progressively emaciates both body and mind.

Celestial Time

Even the planets affect our bodies, by affecting our minds, and their movements are governed by astrological time. This is an indirect statement of our fourth axiom: *Whatever affects the body affects the mind, and vice versa;* the two are intimately interrelated. An example: Mars is the planet which is generally responsible for abdominal disease. An afflicted Mars in a woman's horoscope deranges her brain chemistry, affecting her hormonal systems, which results in disturbed menstruation. Peptic ulcer can often also be traced to the effects of an afflicted Mars, just as lunacy is sometimes really due to Luna. Astrology can be a useful diagnostic tool; until recently, all Ayurvedic physicians were taught Indian astrology.

The natural progression of day and night, the procession of the seasons, the internal clocks which regulate the life span, and even the whirling of the planets in their spheres introduce into every environment forces which destabilize the internal vata, pitta and kapha of those beings who are susceptible to destabilization. Ayurveda states that the time at the junction of two seasons, which may be the "seasons" of any time cycle, is the time when diseases arise. Vata, pitta and kapha must naturally realign themselves at the times when the effects of one season are disappearing and the influence of the other season has not yet fully developed and, whenever this realignment occurs imperfectly, disease develops. To minimize this danger Ayurveda has prescribed purifications to be performed at these junctures.

Routine

The body does not react kindly to frequent change. Harmony is possible only because of rhythm, and rhythm, in the context of the body's physiology, is routine. Centuries ago Ayurveda

established daily and seasonal routines to enhance the harmony of the body's natural rhythms. The details of these routines have changed over the years, but the significance of establishing a routine and sticking to it has not and will not change.

According to the classical doctrine of Ayurveda one rises before dawn in order to help remove the natural early-morning predominance of kapha by excreting bodily wastes and cleaning the teeth, tongue, eyes, nose, mouth and throat. A massage and a bath before lunch help to regulate the pitta in the gut, stimulating the digestion. The heaviest meal of the day should be eaten at noon, since pitta is strongest at that time; only a light meal is permissible at night.

Most Westerners find the thought of a daily massage or oil rub unusual at least, but Ayurveda regards massage as essential to health as bathing, because oil is the world's most effective vata-controlling substance, and vata mediates the digestive pitta. Just as you can make a fire burn brightly when you blow on it with a bellows, the well-regulated force of vata inflames and intensifies the digestive pitta and ensures good digestion. Since the role of vata in the body is movement and sensation, a massage with oil helps regularize and control vata. The patterned movements of Ayurvedic massage cause vata to become patterned (like increases like), and impose rhythm on its capriciousness. Massage serves as passive exercise as well, though daily active exercise is also essential for the preservation of good health.

Food

Ayurveda reserves for diet its most voluminous regulations for healthy living. The minds and bodies of all living beings are nourished by *prana*, the life-force, which is explained more fully below. Because every substance which can serve as nourishment was once alive itself, each food has its own "constitution," which determines how it will affect the eater. Foods are therefore classified according to their tendencies to increase or decrease one or more of the Three Principles. These tendencies are also partly dependent on other factors which affect the food's inherent qualities, such as the climate and the season in which it is grown. Maximum benefit can be extracted from food when it is consumed during the season in which it naturally grows in your locale, because there is the least danger of disturbance to the Three Principles at that time.

Taste

The first interaction of food with the organism occurs in the mouth when it is tasted by the tongue. Ayurveda recognizes Six Tastes: Sweet, Sour, Salty, Bitter, Pungent and Astringent. The first three of these Tastes cause the force of kapha in the body to increase, and cause vata to decrease. The last three Tastes have exactly the opposite effect: they increase vata and decrease kapha. Sour, Salty and Pungent increase pitta; Sweet, Bitter and Astringent decrease it. Because "like increases like," a patient whose personal constitution has a predominance of, say, kapha, or who is suffering from a condition induced by excess kapha, must avoid most foods which taste Sweet, Sour and Salty until the natural balance of the Three Principles is restored.

These Tastes are not actually present in the food, of course; they are present in the eater. Anyone who has eaten an orange just after consuming sugar or candy will recall how sour the orange tasted, though the same orange would have tasted sweet had it been eaten on its own. The orange is the same, but the taste in the mouth has changed. Someone suffering from hepatitis refuses to eat because he has lost his ability to accurately perceive the food's flavor, not because the food has lost its savor. Because the balance of the Three Principles depends in some measure on the balance of Tastes in the body and mind, Ayurveda regards the inability to properly perceive taste as a serious

disease, and suggests methods to reintroduce taste into a patient who has lost his or her own.

The presence of the Six Tastes within the taster has practical applications in treatment. For example, there exists a leaf which when chewed abolishes for some minutes the tongue's ability to sense sweetness. Sugar tastes like sand, and bananas like glue, while the tongue is under its effect. When a diabetic patient chews this leaf just before a meal the sweet component of the food goes untasted and will pass out of the body without being much assimilated, thus disturbing the body's sugar balance only slightly.

Some communities of people possess a natural affinity for a particular taste, and can eat immense quantities of food having that taste without suffering any of the ill effects of the vata- pitta-kapha imbalance which would ordinarily occur. Because each population shares to some extent a pool of genetic material, the individuals born into that population tend to lack certain tastes in their bodies, and naturally gravitate to areas where Nature provides a remedy for their deficiency. In such areas the land's climate and crops provide them with the Tastes they lack, which makes it easier for them to maintain a natural vata-pitta-kapha balance in themselves. For example, while the inhabitants of the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh can consume chilies with no thought for their pungency; other residents of India are often unable to eat their food. The ordinary Anglo-Saxon would certainly collapse under their diet, just as the early British settlers in India used to collapse under their own diets when they insisted upon eating in India food which was better suited for the climate and conditions of their home isles.

"Temperature"

Taste is the first effect of food on the body and mind. The second effect is produced by the food's inherent tendency to cause "heat" or "cold" in the body. This has nothing to do with the food's actual temperature, but refers to its Elemental composition and vata-pitta-kapha ratio. A walnut or mango is "hot" because when it is ingested its essential oils and other chemical components enhance the secretion of acid or bile or other digestive ferments, which promotes appetite and, often but not always, improved digestion. These secretions also cause a general increase in the body's pitta element, possibly by affecting the endocrine glands and their hormones. If the body cannot compensate for the excess "heat" of a walnut or mango, those and other like foods may ulcerate the mouth, produce skin rashes, or generate other conditions characteristic of excessive body "heat." A "cold" food, like milk or guava, strengthens kapha, reduces pitta, and makes the body and mind "cooler."

Food is produced by Nature seasonally as part of her inscrutable but harmonious plan. Why should the mango appear in India during the hottest part of the year? Consider this: during the hot season one feels hot because the body is "cold" inside. If your internal environment was also "hot," it would be more in equilibrium with the external environment, and you would not feel hot. The subjective sensation of being hot or cold arises only when a temperature differential exists. This is illustrated by the well-known test of plunging one hand into cold water and the other into hot, and then both into tepid. The hand that was in cold water now feels the tepid water to be warm, and vice versa for the other hand. Nature has provided the mango, and the other fruits and vegetables which appear in the hot season, to help us correct the imbalance which develops between the external and internal environments.

If there is a deficiency in the body's metabolic mechanisms the system will be unable to assimilate all the mango's "heat," and some condition characteristic of excess pitta is likely to develop. If the excess "heat" remains in the digestive tract diarrhea may occur; if it moves into the

skin, one of the organs in which pitta naturally concentrates itself, a rash is likely. Since however the ideal diet during India's summer is mango juice, it behooves one to prevent accumulation of body "heat" so that one can eat mangoes all season long. One way to reduce the mango's "heat" is to soak the whole fruit in water for about ten minutes before eating it. The "cold" of the water reduces the "heat" of the fruit. The inner kernel of the mango seed can be chewed and swallowed to control diarrhea, or applied as a paste on a mango rash. Nature has provided many foods with a built-in antidote against their possible side-effects, if only one knows how to use them.

If in spite of all precautions you continue to react to mangoes or papayas or fish or other "hot" foods, then Ayurveda suggests that you should concentrate, especially during the summer, on cooling foods and drinks which possess the Sweet, Bitter and Astringent Tastes in excess. Each season has its own dietary restrictions, as does each constitution. See the Appendix for a table of selected common foods classified according to their effects on the Three Principles.

Eating

Every substance in the world can be used as a medicine, say the ancient texts, if it is properly prepared and administered. Since according to our fifth axiom *food is medicine, and medicine, food,* there cannot exist a substance which has no food value at all. However, some substances are exceptionally medicinal, and others are much more useful as food than they are as medicine. We can define food as that which is digested, medicine as that which aids digestion, and poison as that which disturbs digestion. Long ago the Seers who originated Ayurveda classified all the substances which came into their ken, including animal urines and minerals, according to their effects on the body and the diseases in which they are indicated or forbidden.

Even the healthiest and most innocuous of foods can cause disease if one consumes it while ignoring the rules for eating. Mixing foods with antagonistic qualities is unwise, as is eating at the wrong time of day, before a previous meal has left the stomach, or when there is indigestion. Meals should be taken at the same time daily, to establish a routine for the glands which secrete the digestive juices.

Of all the many rules for healthy eating, though, the stricture against overeating is the most important. How much food an individual should eat depends on the power of his or her digestion. Digestive power is influenced by constitution, type of work performed (the sedentary should eat less), type of food (the heavier the food, the less one can eat at a sitting), climate, and other factors. Ordinarily, and especially when the digestive power is weak, the amount of solid food one eats should not be more than one-half of the stomach's capacity. One-fourth of the stomach's capacity is reserved for liquids, and the remainder should be kept empty, to provide space for the food and digestive juices to mix thoroughly.

Under-eating, except when it is prescribed as part of therapy for a disease condition, is almost as harmful as overeating, for excessive fasting emaciates the body, thereby lowering its resistance to both external and internal stresses.

Once you know these rules and understand their intent you can break them on special occasions for worthy objectives, such as dining with your parents during the festival season, as long as you are aware of the consequences of your action. When you do decide to eat something which is likely to disagree with your Principles it is best to consume an "antidote," a substance which partly counteracts the food's potential ill effects. For example, if you have a kapha constitution but like to eat yogurt, you can partially offset the kapha increase which yogurt causes by mixing it with ginger or honey before you consume it. Even intoxicants are not forbidden in Ayurveda, if they are used

sparingly and in appropriate circumstances.

Many Westerners believe India to be a nation of vegetarians, and so conclude that Ayurveda must prohibit the eating of meat. Since however the Ayurvedic texts which now exist were written to train royal physicians, their chapters include among the lists of the qualities of various foods a summary of the attributes of various meats. Only easily-digestible quantities of well-prepared meat should be eaten, in season, says Ayurveda. Beef is said to be the worst of all meats, and venison is said to be the best. Ayurveda frowns on beef not because of any religious injunction but because beef is heavy for digestion and overexcites the senses.

Ayurveda does present arguments against the regular consumption of meat, one being that meat produces too much vata in the body. In fact any high-protein food increases vata. There is no exact equivalent for protein in Sanskrit, but we know that because protein causes invigoration and enhances the ability to maintain a high level of physical activity it must increase vata when it is over-consumed. An excess of protein is definitely bad for the body, and Ayurveda does not share the over-enthusiasm for protein which many Westerners have.

Protein is so overrated today that our high-protein Western diet has begun to affect not only the consumer but his or her progeny as well. Because a child's constitution is determined by the balance of the Three Principles in the parents' bodies at the time of conception, any imbalance in vata, pitta or kapha which is present at that moment will be transmitted to the offspring. For example, an individual who habitually eats foods which enhance vata, and whose habits encourage vata to accumulate, will probably have the vata in her body in a state of vitiation at the moment of reproduction, whether or not her constitution is vata. One generation's food and living habits thereby determine the constitution, the innate ability to be healthy, of the next generation, which is a heavy responsibility for us all.

Many, if not most, of the younger generation of Westerners show three of the cardinal constitutional characteristics of vata: inordinate and disproportionate height; a tendency to flatulence; and the inability to sit quietly for more than perhaps half an hour. When this tendency is added to other vata-increasing influences such as the general preponderance of high-protein fried junk food, fast foods which are preserved or stale, and unsettled meal times, conditions are created which encourage a chronic or permanent vata imbalance to occur. Arthritis, rheumatism, gout, colitis and urinary stones are some of the diseases which can develop from such an imbalance. Prevention is always better than cure, and so dietary control is essential. Even hyperactive children, who exhibit one variety of the mental effects of inordinately aggravated vata, can often be treated with strict control of their diets. Actually, everyone who eats a high- protein diet chock full of chemical additives is bound to be hyperactive to some degree, and a rational diet is bound to benefit them.

Food and the Mind

Since body and mind are intimately related, and "you are what you eat," your diet helps to determine your mental state. The human brain is a collection of chemicals, and the mind and consciousness in a living human being are chemical phenomena. Every substance that you take into your body exerts some effect on your mind once it has been digested and assimilated. The effect a food has on the mind depends upon the relative amounts of the Three Universal Tendencies—sattva, rajas and tamas— within it. Milk and milk products, rice, wheat, mung beans and most fruits are examples of foods which usually promote a calm, balanced mind (unless one happens to be allergic to them); salt, spices, sour foods, meat, fish, garlic, onions and most legumes excite the mind; and heavy, stale, indigestible foods and all intoxicating substances promote mental inertia and cloud the consciousness. Another good reason to be a vegetarian is that the toxins produced during the digestion

of meat are much more detrimental to the mind than are those produced during the digestion of plant material.

Food is of course not the only cause of the mental state. There is a mental constitution, which is determined at the moment of conception just as the physical constitution is. Modern science recognizes that heredity influences the production of diseases like alcoholism and schizophrenia, and genes which influence depression and other emotional states have been discovered. We can confidently expect the discovery of yet other genes which promote many other mental traits. Because control of the mind is so important to control of behavior, which in turn helps to determine how healthy an individual can be, everyone must discourage their negative mental and emotional tendencies in order to encourage a healthy mind-set. Since the option of altering your own genes in order to permanently change your thought patterns is not available to the average individual, dietary control is the easiest way in which to get some control over the mind and the fluctuations which it induces in the consciousness.

The cook plays an important part in the nourishability of food. Meals which are lovingly prepared with a profound desire for the welfare of the eater always benefit the body and mind more than do meals which are commercially prepared, or which have been prepared by someone who is indifferent to or dislikes the proposed eater. No one should cook when in a state of indifference, agitation, sorrow or anger. A woman should be cautious about cooking during her menses, because during her period the velocity and amplitude of her body's hormonal changes, and thus her mental changes, are much increased. Even when she has excellent intentions about the fate of those who eat her food, a woman's harmony is unlikely to be optimal at this time.

Pineapple

Chapter 4 ~ Ayurvedic Treatment

Ayurvedic treatment has three main aspects: removal of the cause, purification and palliation of the Three Principles, and rejuvenation.

1. Removal of the Cause

Disease is produced because of the Law of Cause and Effect, which is the Law of Action and Reaction. Any action which you perform is bound to have some reaction on your organism. Unhealthy actions cause a disequilibrium of the Principles, which is their effect, and until these causes are removed such actions will continue to produce their effects. Your physician cannot effect a cure for you. Physicians exist to expedite the healing process, to help make conditions in the organism more favorable for the re-establishment of normal equilibrium. The surest way of doing this is to remove the situation which caused the disequilibrium, because thereafter the disease will no longer be able to progress. For example, if a man has arthritis because of vitiation of *vata* due to excessively frequent unsatisfying sex, curtailing his lust will ameliorate his condition better than any other therapy.

2. Purification and Palliation of the Three Principles

Once the cause can no longer act on the patient, the devitalized products of the malady must be removed. There are five major methods of purification, collectively called *panchakarma*: emesis, purgation, enema, bloodletting and nasal medication. Of these enema is specific for vata, purgation for pitta, and emesis for kapha. Enema, because it controls vata, which is the main cause of most diseases, is regarded by some authorities as 50% or even 100% of successful treatment. These purificatory procedures are also used to prevent disease. In spring, for example, emesis is indicated so that the kapha which accumulated during the winter is expelled from the body before it has an opportunity to cause disease. Likewise, purgation is used in summer to remove accumulated pitta, and enema in autumn to control vitiated vata. Pancha Karma should usually be performed under expert supervision, for when these techniques are improperly administered they may themselves cause imbalance in the Three Principles and induce disease. Also, because of feebleness, season, or age, some patients are not fit for these purificatory measures.

After purification, or instead of it in those people who cannot withstand it, palliative treatment is indicated. Animal, vegetable and mineral products, both alone and in combination, are used to help balance the Principles. Medicated oils, used internally and externally, are the best palliatives for vata; clarified butter is best for pitta; and honey is best for kapha. As a group the palliative medications, which are usually herbal compounds, are aimed at increasing the power of the digestion. The strengthened digestion then girds up the body to expel the morbidity on its own.

Therapy may be internal or external, and the choice of one or another mode is usually made according to the location of the malady. Massage with medicated oils, which is used both to prepare a patient for purification and as an independent therapy, is one such external treatment. It has been raised to the level of a fine art in the South Indian state of Kerala, and is very useful when the vata Principle resists ordinary treatment because it has been vitiated all throughout the body. In such cases massage therapy is accompanied by internal medication.

Internal treatment has three components: the medication, its vehicle, and the diet. The texts say, "Fasting is the first medicine," and it should especially be employed in acute diseases in which there are many accumulated toxins. Fasting is prohibited in diseases like tuberculosis which are characterized by wasting of the body. A total fast is ordinarily prescribed only for two or three days. Thin rice gruel is given thereafter, followed a few days later by soup of mung beans or meat, and finally by a return to more normal food, in smaller quantity than usual. The diet prescribed is most often one which is antagonistic in Taste and "temperature" to the Principle which is in excess. For example, the diet in a disease caused by excess pitta should be cool, liquid, and bereft of spices and oil. Rice and mung bean soup is an ideal regimen in such a condition. Specific diets are described for most diseases, and many diseases can be cured by changes in diet alone.

"Vehicle" is a concept unique to Ayurveda. Its purpose is threefold: to enhance the effect of the medication; to prevent any possible side-effects; and to promote quick, thorough absorption. Butter and honey are common vehicles for diseases of vata; for pitta, clarified butter or sweet fruit juice; and for kapha, honey or warm water. The medicine is mixed thoroughly with its vehicle before being taken.

Because herbal medicines are the most commonly used Ayurvedic treatments, some people believe that Ayurveda is purely herbal medicine, which is untrue. Ayurvedic texts describe the activity and uses of hundreds and hundreds of herbs, and provide explicit directions for their collection, preservation, preparation and use. Climate and soil characteristics affect a plant's inherent qualities to such an extent that an herb grown on a rainy plain may exert different effects on an individual from the same species of herb grown on an arid mountainside. Herbs are often potentiated by grinding them repeatedly in a small quantity of their own expressed juice or with the juices of other plants.

Sadly, much irretrievable herbal lore which had been passed down verbally from guru to disciple for centuries has been lost because it was never written down. Even today, gurus who cannot find fit disciples will allow their knowledge to die with them rather than permit it to fall into unworthy hands. Much other plant and mineral lore is so perfectly hidden in obscure passages from the Vedas and other texts that without a key, available only through a knowledgeable guru, their meaning must remain forever locked up.

3. Rejuvenation and Virilization

Ayurveda is said to have eight limbs. Of these internal medicine, surgery, eye-ear-nose-throat, gynecology and obstetrics (which includes pediatrics), and toxicology are the five which have identical parallels in modern medicine. Ayurvedic psychology is part of the wider topic called demonology, the treatment of spirit possession. This is really the province of Tantra, but since Tantra and Ayurveda are identical in origin and differ only in emphasis some information on demonology is also included in Ayurveda.

Ayurveda's last two limbs have no real parallels in today's medical science. Both rejuvenation and virilization are concerned with the nourishment of all the tissues which make up the body. This is especially true with the semen (and its female equivalent), which is the culmination of the body's nutritive processes and is the origin of the body's aura. Rejuvenation if properly done need only be done once in a lifetime, but usually it needs to be performed after every illness to enhance the system's immunity. Virilization must be done repeatedly as long as semen is being depleted. The substances used in these therapies undergo complex preparations, and strict regulation of diet is necessary for the duration of the therapy.

Bay Leaves

Chapter 5 ~ Ayurveda and Tantra

Tantra is the spiritual science which is derived from the Atharva Veda, the text from which Ayurveda also sprang. Ayurveda's emphasis on astrology, prana and the use of metals in treatment has its roots in Tantra, and while Ayurveda collects plants for use as physical medicine, Tantra uses similar collection methods and rituals to procure plants for more occult purposes. Ayurveda and Tantra are really neighboring regions on the continuum of procedures established for preparing an individual for immortality, and all Ayurvedic treatments are by-products of this search.

Inspired by Tantra, Ayurveda teaches that nectar can become poison, and poison nectar, depending on the skill of the user. Poison's inherent power makes it good raw material for medicine when it is properly prepared because it exhibits its effects speedily and thoroughly. Although tobacco arrived in India with the Portuguese, in the five centuries since its introduction it has become widely renowned both in Ayurveda and Tantra as a marvelous medicine. Most people in the modern world who use tobacco experience its side-effects, because they misuse it. They then condemn tobacco, instead of taking responsibility for their own ignorance of how to use it properly.

Tantra concentrates on the Three Universal Tendencies rather than the Three Principles, and believes that there is no bodily illness which is not associated with an imbalance in the mind. For example, even the indigestion due to overeating is really due to the overpowering of the intellect by the force of gluttony. The intellect knows better, but it acquiesces and the disease develops. Tantra emphasizes that by harmonizing the Three Universal Tendencies in the mind, which can be done in several ways including control of diet or breath or thought, the physical body will remain healthy.

Rejuvenation and virilization in the Ayurvedic context are meant for those who want to enjoy their lives; Tantra is meant for those who demand more from life than sensory enjoyment. Tantra and Ayurveda both recognize Three Pillars of life: food, sleep and sex. Ayurveda permits indulgence in these three, within certain healthy limits, but Tantra seeks to go beyond their limitations.

There are two ways in which to overcome the influence of most indulgences: to abstain from enjoyments through force of will, or to indulge to the point of satiation. When one is totally satiated the desire for gratification automatically drops away. Unfortunately, there is no point of satiation for food, sleep or sex. No matter how much one eats, sleeps or copulates today, those appetites will return tomorrow stronger than before. These three aspects of life must therefore be controlled, by enjoying them within limits and by abstaining from them from time to time.

Some people's minds are naturally firm, and their self-discipline is innately iron-ribbed. For them Tantric rituals of the "Left-Hand Path" have been prescribed in which meat, fish, parched grain, alcohol and sex are used sacramentally to promote mental renunciation. Some charlatans teach some Westerners to pretend to practice Tantra, as a cover for unbridled licentiousness, but this thoroughly cynical and pernicious approach is only motivated by greed for gain from disciples. Sex, meat-eating and drinking outside the ritual is strictly prohibited to a sincere seeker, and no amount of leniency can change this incontrovertible fact. If you have no honest, experienced guru to turn to for guidance it is unwise to dabble in Left-Hand Tantra. The potential for immense internal and external delusion make the game not worth its price.

Tantra is esoteric, quick, dangerous, meant for the select few, and concerned predominantly

with the mind. Ayurveda is exoteric, slow, safe, meant for the many, and concerned predominantly with the body. While Ayurveda harmonizes the flow of substances and information between the individual and the environment, Tantra minimizes the effects of the environment on the individual, which is a surer path to harmony since there is less alteration of state. Reduced flow reduces the adaptation required to produce new equilibria, and so health must increase.

Although Ayurveda maintains that "like increases like," there are times when like is administered to decrease like. Such occasions, which are termed "violent procedures," are gifts from the Atharva Vedic tradition which metamorphosed into Tantra. One example is the use of shock therapy in mental illness, which is due primarily to obstructed vata in body and mind. Shock therapy causes a sudden increase in vata's force, which then bursts through the obstruction and normalizes itself. Or, in severe, refractory jaundice drugs which are extremely fiery are sometimes given, to cause violent purgation and vomiting which plow through all barriers and expel the accumulated bile from the body. These methods, which are not suitable for everyone, should not be attempted by inexperienced therapists.

Some of the sectors of Ayurveda that are especially connected with Tantra include:

Alchemy

Minerals and metals in medicine are Tantra's special province because they are derived from alchemy, which in India is the science of the metal mercury. From mercury can be produced the fabled philosopher's stone, which can turn base metals into gold and make earth-bound humans fly in the air. Properly prepared, mercury can also be transformed into the elixir of immortality. Mercury is treated like a living being: it is prepared by "awakening" it, making it "hungry," "feeding" it, making it "swoon," and finally "killing" it. It is "killed" by incineration.

Mercury is the king of minerals, but sulfur, arsenic, gold, silver, tin, zinc, copper, iron, bismuth and mica, as well as other elements also find a place in alchemical processes, and incineration is the usual preparatory procedure for most of them, for fire predigests and potentiates them. A sense of buoyancy and vitality arises within ten minutes or so of taking a dose of a metallic oxide, due to the release of the subtle form of oxygen which it contains. This is why oxides are incinerated many times, and why they are not meant to be stored in airtight containers: the more oxygen they absorb, the better will be their initial effect. The metal itself exerts its action after it enters the system. Some oxides require dozens of incinerations for optimal effectiveness— mica needs one thousand—so their preparation is time-intensive, but they have definite advantages over herbal drugs. Among these advantages are that their doses are smaller, they have no expiration date, they are easy to take, and they are almost tasteless.

Prana

It is said that one can bring mercury under control by the same means by which one controls the breath, and vice versa. This connection explains how mercury can give immortality: by control of prana. Prana, the Ch'i of Chinese medicine, is the vital force which causes the inert assemblage of tissues known as the body to live, and causes body, mind and spirit to be strung together like pearls on a string. In this age human beings get some of their prana from the outside air by breathing, but most of it comes from our food. Food is not the only source of prana, however. Anyone who can move beyond the normal human relationship with Nature and strike a more profound harmony with Her can tap into sources of prana which are denied to ordinary mortals. This can occur only after the physical body has been thoroughly purged of all accumulated toxins, and the *nadis*, the channels in which

prana moves, have been thoroughly cleaned.

These channels, which are in some ways comparable to the meridians of Chinese medicine, are not physical structures, though they do exist in close functional relationship with physical structures. The radial pulse, Ayurveda's chief diagnostic aid, is one point where several channels meet. Of the 72,000 channels of prana within the human organism three are the most important: the channels of the Sun, the Moon, and the Fire (some call it the Air) Channels, which exist in relation to the right nostril, the left nostril, and both nostrils respectively. The myriad channels also meet in subtle plexuses which exist in close proximity to physical nerve plexuses. Six of these subtle plexuses called *chakras* are commonly distinguished: The first five of them are associated each with one of the Five Elements, and the sixth consists of the union of the Sun and the Moon Channels. The Fire Channel joins the Sun and the Moon in the Thousand-Petalled Lotus above the head.

The Three Channels

Just as the sun heats and the moon cools the earth, the Solar and Lunar Channels respectively "heat" and "cool" the body, increasing and decreasing the metabolic rate. If you observe yourself you will note that both of your nostrils do not respire with equal force at all times. Usually, one nostril works harder than the other, with a cycle of about an hour and a half for each. When the Solar Channel functions the force of the Fire Principle tends to increase, which "heats up" the body and makes the mind more active. The Lunar Channel has the reverse effect: its action tends to increase the force of Water, which "cools down" the body and reduces the mind's activity. The two nostrils function with equal force at dusk and dawn, and during deep meditation. Dusk and dawn are the two times suggested in the Vedic literature for worship, because at those hours the Fiery Channel works, which despite its name tends to increase the force of Air, thereby lessening the effect of the body on the mind.

There is a Hindi proverb which refers to the position adopted during sleep: "On the right, *yogi*; on the left, *bhogi*; on the back, *rogi*." Sleeping on the right side hampers the functioning of the Solar Channel and allows the Lunar Channel to work more, which makes the body cool and relaxed. Since yoga is defined as control of the fluctuations in the consciousness, a yogi must have a calm, relaxed mind.

Sleeping on the left side activates the Solar Channel, which increases appetites, including those for food, sleep and sex, and enhances mental activity, including dreams. This transforms an individual into a bhogi, an enjoyer of sensual pleasures.

When you sleep on your back the Fiery Channel functions predominantly, which is bad for the body because it disconnects the linkages between the mental control systems and the physical metabolic processes. A back-sleeper loses organic equilibrium and becomes a rogi, a patient of some disease or another. Sleeping on the stomach obstructs the free movement of prana in its subtle channels, with implications as serious as for obstruction of Air in its physical channels: disharmony, disequilibrium and disease.

Prana and Nourishment

While physical health means harmony of vata, pitta and kapha, true health can exist only when prana moves freely in both the physical and the subtle channels. Any sort of disharmony of prana will produce disease, for deranged prana will derange vata, pitta and kapha, and imbalance of the Three Principles will affect the movement of prana in its channels. But prana is in a way predominant over the Three Principles, because it is prana which nourishes the body's vata. In a sense, prana is itself

life. When we speak of eating to live we mean that we are sustained by the prana contained within the food, and not the physical form of the food itself. The quality of the prana obtained, and therefore the relative chaos or harmony of the body and mind, is determined by the quality of the food consumed. While junk food is the ultimate in chaotic prana, simple, pure, natural food provides the sort of balanced, beneficial prana which keeps body and mind balanced and benefic.

Prana exists in everything which lives, and nothing can be food for us unless it was once alive. The old Indian version of the law of the jungle—"life lives off life"—is a simple expression of the basic identity of prana and life. Prana permeates the universe, however, and it is possible to obtain prana from sources other than food. One way to do this is to progressively lighten and gradually reduce the diet from grains and vegetables to fruits, roots and tubers to milk, then to water alone, and finally to air. Many people rail against milk as a mucus-causing cow-derived poison, but fresh raw cow's milk is said to have the richest and purest form of prana of any food. The jump from milk to water and air is of course difficult, and cannot be done with an ordinary fallible human body. Only when the channels in which prana moves are absolutely clean and clear will there be no hindrance to imbibing prana directly from the atmosphere in quantities large enough to support life. Pure air is a boon, since a polluted atmosphere provides polluted prana. Prana is not oxygen; prana is that which gives oxygen its power to energize the body's cells.

True immortality is the state in which there is no opportunity or possibility for the Three Principles to become deranged. Death can occur only when there is some disturbance in the equilibrium of the external and internal prana. So long as prana is perfectly under control vata, pitta and kapha will take their direction from prana, and will continue to work indefinitely without complaint.

Breath Control

Not everyone aims as high as immortality, but everyone would be benefited by increased prana and cleaner channels. Clean, wholesome food is the first step in this process, and the next step is active purification of the channels. This is the purpose of the postures and breathing exercises of Hatha Yoga, the extension of Ayurveda beyond the limits of the physical body. The postures limber up the body and reduce many of the somatic tensions which interfere with prana's gait. The breathing exercises are meant to burn away the impurities of the channels, as a bellows blown onto a smelter fire.

Breath control is however a two-edged sword. Unrestricted food intake plus rigorous breath control will inflame the fires of hunger and lust and can turn an unwary spiritual aspirant into a debauchee, while insufficient food plus strenuous breath retention can emaciate the organism. While breath control is one of the methods which can be used to treat a sick human being, it produces increased physical purity and mental clarity only when it is accompanied by strict dietary rules.

Diagnosis and Treatment in Tantra

Tantric adepts may use Ayurvedic pulse diagnosis for their purposes, or they may choose to directly perceive the body's aura and the qualities of the movements of prana in the Solar and Lunar Channels. Imbalanced prana may be rebalanced with the help of herbs gathered at the proper astrological moment (which enhances their subtle potency), with mercury, breath control, or rituals meant to influence the planets. Gems and metals worn on the body can often minimize the ill-effects of afflicted planets.

Knowledge of the body's subtle channels is useful even for healthy people. Most married

women in India wear two small silver rings on the second toe of each foot. As they walk each ring presses a point which regulates the activity of the "Art of Love" Channel. This controls the woman's sexual passion, preventing it from increasing without limit, since there is no point of satiation for food, sleep or sex. The rings, which do not suppress sexual desire, act something like the governors on an engine. This method of lust restraint was derived by the ancient Rishis to help preserve the stability of society, lest a woman develop such a craving for sex that she become promiscuous. Though feminists will brand this male chauvinism, it is at least a good example of the practical utility of knowing how these channels work.

Mantras and Language

The knowledge and use of mantras are another, more subtle aspect of Tantra. Mantras are beyond the scope of this book, but by way of a brief and oversimplified explanation, we can consider that the basis for their effect depends upon the premise that everything in the universe can be expressed as a sum of various vibrations. Flesh and blood, bone and sinew are expressed by gross vibrations; the vibrations of vata, pitta and kapha are a bit subtler; and prana is subtler still. Balance in the organism depends on the harmony of all these vibrations; any sort of disharmony means disease. If you can "feel" or otherwise know how these vibrations are disturbed, an appropriate mantra judiciously employed can provide a new frequency which can reharmonize them. A mantra may have one or many syllables, and each syllable's phonetic value exerts a specific effect on one or another target area of the body. Strict discipline and great internal prana are necessary to make the vibrations of the mantra strong enough to succeed at their task.

Ayurveda and Tantra are best taught in Sanskrit because Sanskrit is an engineered language. Each of its fifty-one letters is a mantra, and each of the words prepared from these letters is a mantra, with its own phonetic value which is closely associated with its meaning. The Seers took great care to design for Sanskrit a logically perfect grammar, and as a result each Sanskrit word affects the speaker or hearer's organism subliminally. For example, the hearing, reading and speaking of the word prana exerts a subtle subliminal vibration on both the mind and the body, a vibration which is congruent with the substance "prana," and which therefore creates the image of prana in the mind directly. This vibration is not available to a student who thinks, reads and speaks of prana in terms of "vital force," or some other imperfect equivalent. The totality of the effects of all these words cultivates the mind, allowing the seeds of understanding of these sciences to take root and to grow without hindrances or weeds.

Fire

Fire's specialty is transformation. Ayurveda prepares metallic oxides by incineration, and Tantra prepares herbs by offering them with mantras to a consecrated fire in the ritual known as Homa. This method of preparation is even more effective than any of the many Ayurvedic methods for processing herbs. The mantra may be specific for the disease to be cured, or it may be one which has a generally health-producing effect. The fire must be fed with wood which has medicinal qualities, and after the ritual is over the ash which is collected is administered therapeutically in small quantities.

The worship of Fire is beyond even the cultivation of prana. The Rishis harnessed the power of the sun by harnessing fire. While the lore of the Rishis is beyond the comprehension of ordinary mortals, we can still make use of the system which they developed especially for everyone who lives in this imperfect world of ours: Ayurveda.

Lamp

Chapter 6 ~ Conclusion

"There is no end to Ayurveda," says an ancient text, but there must be an end to this little book, and a summation of all the concepts contained therein, which hopefully have been expressed well enough to make them comprehensible to the Western mind.

Ayurveda is the ultimate in holistic sciences because it takes into account all the important natural forces which act on the human being. The remedy for disease is to be found in the cause, because, in Vimalananda's words, "cause is effect concealed, and effect is cause revealed." Cause and effect form not a dialectic but a continuum, which is expressed in the physical world by the permutations of the Five Elements according to our axioms:

- The Law of the Macrocosm and Microcosm. Vata, pitta and kapha as the governing Principles of physical existence.
- Like increases like.
- Whatever affects the body affects the mind, and vice versa.
- Food is medicine, medicine food.

Disease is the disequilibrium of vata, pitta and kapha or, in the mind, of the Three Universal Tendencies; diagnosis is their estimation, via methods such as pulse examination; and treatment is their return to normal, by manipulation of habit and diet, and by taking the help of animal, vegetable and mineral medications. Human constitution, time, taste and temperature of food, and the esoteric doctrines of Tantra are all fundamental parts of the system of Ayurveda.

Health is relative. Health in Ayurveda, which is defined as the balance of vata, pitta and kapha, is not health in Tantra, which concentrates more on prana, on the Solar and Lunar Channels, and on other such subtle structures. There is no end to the possibilities for harmony between the external and the internal. The ultimate aim of harmony is perfect freedom from reliance on the external world. An individual who becomes a self-sustaining cosmos experiences true liberty, or Svatantrata, "Self-Tantra." The pursuit of health and immortality is as eternal as the pursuit of knowledge, and as important.

Appendix

Chart For Determining Your Constitution

To determine your constitution it is best to fill out the chart on the following pages twice. First base your choices on what is most consistent over a long period of your life (your prakruti), then fill it out a second time responding to how you have been recently in the last month or two (your vikruti). Sometimes it helps to have a friend ask you the questions and fill in the chart for you, as they may have good insight (and impartiality) to offer. On a piece of paper, make 3 columns with the titles vata, pitta, and kapha. Then as you go through the chart, make a tick mark in the appropriate column for your answers. After finishing the chart, add up the number of marks under vata, pitta and kapha to discover your own balance of doshas in your prakruti and vikruti. Most people will have one dosha predominant, a few will have two doshas approximately equal and even fewer will have all three doshas in equal proportion. For instance if your vikruti shows more pitta than your prakruti, you will want to follow a pitta soothing diet to try and lower your pitta principle. If your prakruti and vikruti seem about the same, then you would choose the diet of your strongest dosha. If you have a kapha disorder at the moment, like sinus congestion, you may want to eat a kapha soothing diet until it disappears.

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Constitutional Chart

Body size
Vata – Slim
Pitta – Medium
Kapha – Large

Body weight
Vata – Low
Pitta – Medium
Kapha – Overweight

Skin
Vata – Thin, Dry, Cold, Rough, Dark
Pitta – Smooth, Oily, Warm, Red, Yellow
Kapha – Thick, Oily, Cool, White, Pale

Hair
Vata – Dry Brown, Black, Knotted, Brittle, Scarce
Pitta – Straight, Oily, Blond, Grey, Red, Bald
Kapha – Thick, Curly, Oily, Wavy, Luxuriant

Teeth
Vata – Stick out, Big, Roomy, Thin gums
Pitta – Medium, Soft, Tender gums
Kapha – Healthy, White, Strong gums

Nose
Vata – Uneven shape, Deviated septum
Pitta – Long pointed, Red nose-tip
Kapha – Short Rounded, Button nose

Eyes
Vata – Small, Sunken, Dry, Active, Black, Brown, Nervous
Pitta – Sharp, Bright, Grey, Green, Yellow/red, Sensitive to light
Kapha – Big, beautiful, Blue, Calm, Loving

Nails
Vata – Dry, Rough, Brittle, Break easily
Pitta – Sharp, Flexible, Pink, Lustrous
Kapha – Thick, Oily, Smooth, Polished

Lips

Vata – Dry, Cracked, Black/brown tinge
Pitta – Red, Inflamed, Yellowish
Kapha – Smooth, Oily, Pale, Whitish

Chin
Vata – Thin, Angular
Pitta – Tapering
Kapha – Rounded, Double

Cheeks
Vata – Wrinkled, Sunken
Pitta – Smooth, Flat
Kapha – Rounded, Plump

Neck
Vata – Thin, Tall
Pitta – Medium
Kapha – Big, Folded

Chest
Vata – Flat, Sunken
Pitta – Moderate
Kapha – Expanded, Round

Belly
Vata – Thin, Flat, Sunken
Pitta – Moderate
Kapha – Big, Pot-bellied

Belly-button
Vata – Small, Irregular, Herniated
Pitta – Oval, Superficial
Kapha – Big, Deep, Round, Stretched

Hips
Vata – Slender, Thin
Pitta –
Moderate
Kapha – Heavy, Big

Joints
Vata – Cold, Cracking
Pitta – Moderate
Kapha – Large, Lubricated

Appetite
Vata – Irregular, Scanty
Pitta – Strong, Unbearable
Kapha – Slow but steady

Digestion
Vata – Irregular, Forms gas
Pitta – Quick, Causes burning
Kapha – Prolonged, Forms mucous

Taste
Vata – Sweet, Sour, Salty
Pitta – Sweet, Bitter, Astringent
Kapha – Bitter, Pungent, Astringent

Thirst
Vata – Changeable
Pitta – Surplus
Kapha – Sparse

Elimination
Vata – Constipation
Pitta – Loose
Kapha – Thick, Oily, Sluggish

Physical Activity
Vata – Hyperactive
Pitta – Moderate
Kapha – Slow

Mental Activity
Vata – Hyperactive
Pitta – Moderate
Kapha – Dull, Slow

Emotions
Vata – Anxiety, Fear, Uncertainty
Pitta – Anger, Hate, Jealousy
Kapha – Calm, Greedy, Attachment

Faith
Vata – Variable
Pitta – Extremist
Kapha – Consistent

Intellect
Vata – Quick but faulty response
Pitta – Accurate response
Kapha – Slow, Exact

Recollection
Vata – Recent good, remote poor
Pitta – Distinct
Kapha – Slow and sustained

Dreams
Vata – Quick, Active, Many, Fearful, Flying
Pitta – Fiery, War, Violence
Kapha – Lakes, Snow, Romantic

Sleep
Vata – Scanty, Broken up, Sleeplessness
Pitta – Little but sound
Kapha – Deep, Prolonged

Speech
Vata – Rapid, Unclear
Pitta – Sharp, Penetrating
Kapha – Slow, monotonous

Financial
Vata – Poor, spends on trifles
Pitta – Spends money on luxuries
Kapha – Rich, Good money preserver

Food Guidelines for Basic Constitutional Types

NOTE: *Guidelines provided in these categories are general. Specific adjustments for individual requirements may need to be made, e.g. food allergies, strength of* agni, *season of the year and degree of* dosha *predominance or aggravation.*
** okay in moderation ** okay rarely*

Vata: Fruits ~ FAVOR
Generally most sweet fruit
Apples (cooked), Applesauce, Apricots, Avocado, Bananas, Berries, Cherries, Coconut, Dates (fresh), Figs (fresh), Grapefruit, Grapes, Kiwi, Lemons, Limes, Mangoes, Melons, Oranges, Papaya, Peaches, Pineapple, Plums, Prunes (soaked), Raisins (soaked), Rhubarb, Strawberries, Tamarind

Vata: Fruits ~ AVOID
Generally most dried fruit
Apples (raw), Cranberries, Dates (dry), Figs (dry), Pears, Persimmons, Pomegranates, Raisins (dry), Prunes (dry), Watermelon

Pitta: Fruits ~ FAVOR
Generally most sweet fruit
Apples (sweet), Applesauce, Apricots (sweet), Avocado, Berries (sweet), Cherries (sweet), Coconut, Dates, Figs, Grapes (red & purple), Limes*, Mangoes (ripe), Melons, Oranges (sweet), Papaya*, Pears, Pineapple (sweet), Plums (sweet), Pomegranates, Prunes, Raisins, Watermelon
* okay in moderation

Pitta: Fruits ~ AVOID
Generally most sour fruit
Apples (sour), Apricots (sour), Bananas, Berries (sour), Cherries (sour), Cranberries, Grapefruit, Grapes (green), Kiwi**, Lemons, Mangoes (green), Oranges (sour), Peaches, Persimmons, Pineapple (sour), Plums (sour), Rhubarb, Strawberries, Tamarind
** okay rarely

Kapha: Fruits ~ FAVOR
Generally most astringent fruit
Apples, Applesauce, Apricots, Berries, Cherries, Cranberries, Figs (dry)*, Grapes*, Lemons*, Limes*, Peaches, Pears, Persimmons, Pomegranates, Prunes, Raisins, Strawberries*
* okay in moderation

Kapha: Fruits ~ AVOID
Generally most sweet & sour fruit
Avocado, Bananas, Coconut, Dates, Figs (fresh), Grapefruit, Kiwi, Mangos**, Melons, Oranges, Papaya, Pineapple, Plums, Rhubarb, Tamarind, Watermelon
** okay rarely

Vata: Vegetables ~ FAVOR
In general vegetables should be cooked
Asparagus, Beets, Cabbage* (cooked), Carrots, Cauliflower*, Cilantro, Cucumber, Daikon radish*, Fennel (anise), Garlic, Green beans, Green chilies, Jerusalem artichoke*, Leafy greens*, Leeks, Lettuce*, Mustard greens*, Okra, Olives, black, Onions (cooked)*, Parsley*, Parsnip, Peas (cooked), Potatoes, sweet, Pumpkin, Radishes (cooked)*, Rutabaga, Spaghetti squash*, Spinach (cooked)*, Spinach (raw)*, Sprouts*, Squash, summer & winter, Taro root, Turnip greens*, Watercress, Zucchini
* okay in moderation

Vata: Vegetables ~ AVOID
Generally frozen, raw or dried vegetables
Artichoke, Beet greens**, Bitter melon, Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, Burdock root, Cabbage (raw), Cauliflower (raw), Celery, Corn (fresh)**, Dandelion greens, Eggplant, Horseradish**, Kale, Kohlrabi, Mushrooms, Olives, green, Onions (raw), Peas (raw), Peppers, sweet & hot, Potatoes, white, Prickly pear (fruit & leaves), Radish (raw), Tomatoes (cooked)**, Tomatoes (raw), Turnips, Wheat grass sprouts
** okay rarely

Pitta: Vegetables ~ FAVOR
In general sweet & bitter vegetables
Artichoke, Asparagus, Beets (cooked), Bitter melon, Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots (cooked), Carrots (raw)*, Cauliflower, Celery, Cilantro, Cucumber, Dandelion greens, Fennel (anise), Green beans, Jerusalem artichoke, Kale, Leafy greens, Leeks (cooked), Lettuce, Mushrooms, Okra, Olives, black, Onions (cooked), Parsley, Parsnips, Peas, Peppers, sweet, Potatoes, sweet & white, Prickly pear (leaves), Pumpkin, Radishes (cooked), Rutabaga, Spaghetti squash, Sprouts (not spicy), Squash, winter & summer, Taro root, Watercress*, Wheat grass sprouts, Zucchini
* okay in moderation

Pitta: Vegetables ~ AVOID
In general pungent vegetables
Beet greens, Beets (raw), Burdock root, Corn (fresh)**, Daikon radish, Eggplant**, Garlic, Green chilies, Horseradish, Kohlrabi **, Leeks (raw), Mustard greens, Olives, green, Onions (raw), Peppers (hot), Prickly pear (fruit), Radishes (raw), Spinach (cooked)**, Spinach (raw), Tomatoes, Turnip greens, Turnips
** okay rarely

Kapha: Vegetables ~ FAVOR
In general most pungent & bitter vegetables
Artichoke, Asparagus, Beet greens, Beets, Bitter melon, Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, Burdock root, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Cilantro, Corn, Daikon radish, Dandelion greens, Eggplant, Fennel (anise), Garlic, Green beans, Green chilies, Horseradish, Jerusalem artichoke, Kale, Kohlrabi, Leafy greens, Leeks, Lettuce, Mushrooms, Mustard greens, Okra, Onions, Parsley, Peas, Peppers, sweet & hot, Potatoes, white, Prickly pear (fruit & leaves), Radishes, Rutabaga, Spaghetti squash*, Spinach, Sprouts, Squash (summer), Tomatoes (cooked), Turnip greens, Turnips, Watercress,

Wheat grass
* okay in moderation

Kapha: Vegetables ~ AVOID
In general sweet & juicy vegetables
Cucumber, Olives, black or green, Parsnips**, Potatoes, sweet, Pumpkin, Squash, winter, Taro root, Tomatoes (raw), Zucchini
** okay rarely

Vata: Grains ~ FAVOR
Amaranth*, Durham flour, Oats (cooked), Pancakes, Quinoa, Rice (all kinds), Seitan (wheat meat), Sprouted wheat bread (Essene), Wheat
* okay in moderation

Vata: Grains ~ AVOID
Barley, Bread (with yeast), Buckwheat, Cereals (cold, dry or puffed), Corn, Couscous, Crackers, Granola, Millet, Muesli, Oat bran, Oats (dry), Pasta**, Polenta**, Rice cakes**, Rye, Sago, Spelt, Tapioca, Wheat bran
** okay rarely

Pitta: Grains ~ FAVOR
Amaranth, Barley, Cereal, dry, Couscous, Crackers, Durham flour, Granola, Oat bran, Oats (cooked), Pancakes, Pasta, Rice (basmati, white, wild), Rice cakes, Seitan (wheat meat), Spelt, Sprouted wheat bread (Essene), Tapioca, Wheat, Wheat bran

Pitta: Grains ~ AVOID
Bread (with yeast), Buckwheat, Corn, Millet, Muesli**, Oats (dry), Polenta**, Quinoa, Rice (brown)**, Rye
** okay rarely

Kapha: Grains ~ FAVOR
Amaranth*, Barley, Buckwheat, Cereal (cold, dry or puffed), Corn, Couscous, Crackers, Durham flour*, Granola, Millet, Muesli, Oat bran, Oats (dry), Polenta, Quinoa*, Rice (basmati, wild)*, Rye, Seitan (wheat meat), Spelt*, Sprouted wheat bread (Essene), Tapioca, Wheat bran
* okay in moderation

Kapha: Grains ~ AVOID
Bread (with yeast), Oats (cooked), Pancakes, Pasta**, Rice (brown, white), Rice cakes**, Wheat
** okay rarely

Vata: Legumes ~ FAVOR
Lentils (red)*, Mung beans, Mung dal, Soy cheese*, Soy milk*, Soy sauce*, Soy sausages*, Tofu*, Tur dal, Urad dal
* okay in moderation

Vata: Legumes ~ AVOID
Aduki beans, Black beans, Black-eyed peas, Chickpeas or garbanzo beans, Kidney beans, Lentils (brown), Lima beans, Miso**, Navy beans, Peas (dried), Pinto beans, Soy beans, Soy flour, Soy powder, Split Peas, Tempeh, White beans

** okay rarely

Pitta: Legumes ~ FAVOR
Aduki beans, Black beans, Black-eyed peas, Chickpeas or garbanzo beans, Kidney beans, Lentils, brown & red, Lima beans, Mung beans, Mung dal, Navy beans, Peas (dried), Pinto beans, Soy beans, Soy cheese, Soy flour*, Soy milk, Soy powder*, Split peas, Tempeh, Tofu, White beans

* okay in moderation

Pitta: Legumes ~ AVOID
Miso, Soy sauce, Soy sausages, Tur dal, Urad dal

Kapha: Legumes ~ FAVOR
Aduki beans, Black beans, Black-eyed peas, Chickpeas or garbanzo beans, Lentils (red & brown), Lima beans, Mung beans*, Mung dal*, Navy beans, Peas (dried), Pinto beans, Soy milk, Soy sausages, Split peas, Tempeh, Tofu (hot)*, Tur dal, White beans

* okay in moderation

Kapha: Legumes ~ AVOID
Kidney beans, Soy beans, Soy cheese, Soy flour, Soy powder, Soy sauce, Tofu (cold), Urad dal, Miso

Vata: Dairy ~ FAVOR
Most dairy is good!
Butter, Buttermilk, Butter, Cheese (hard)*, Cheese (soft), Cottage cheese, Cow's milk, Ghee, Goat's cheese, Goat's milk, Ice cream*, Sour cream*, Yogurt (diluted & spiced)*

* okay in moderation

Vata: Dairy ~ AVOID
Cow's milk (powdered), Goat's milk (powdered), Yogurt (plain, frozen or w/ fruit)

Pitta: Dairy ~ FAVOR
Butter (unsalted), Cheese (soft, not aged, unsalted), Cottage cheese, Cow's milk, Ghee, Goat's milk, Goat's cheese (soft, unsalted), Ice cream, Yogurt (freshly made & diluted)*

* okay in moderation

Pitta: Dairy ~ AVOID
Butter (salted), Buttermilk, Cheese (hard), Sour cream, Yogurt (plain, frozen or w/fruit)

Kapha: Dairy ~ FAVOR
Buttermilk*, Cottage cheese (from skimmed goat's milk), Ghee*, Goat's cheese (unsalted & not aged)*, Goat's milk, skim, Yogurt (diluted)

* okay in moderation

Kapha: Dairy ~ AVOID
Butter (salted), Butter (unsalted)**, Cheese (soft & hard), Cow's milk, Ice cream, Sour cream, Yogurt (plain, frozen or w/fruit)

** okay rarely

Vata: Animal Foods ~ FAVOR
Beef, Buffalo, Chicken (dark), Chicken (white)*, Duck, Eggs, Fish (freshwater or sea), Salmon, Sardines, Seafood, Shrimp, Tuna fish, Turkey (dark)

* okay in moderation

Vata: Animal Foods ~ AVOID
Lamb, Pork, Rabbit, Venison, Turkey (white)

Pitta: Animal Foods ~ FAVOR
Buffalo, Chicken (white), Eggs (albumen or white only), Fish (freshwater), Rabbit, Shrimp*, Turkey (white), Venison

* okay in moderation

Pitta: Animal Foods ~ AVOID
Beef, Chicken (dark), Duck, Eggs (yolk), Fish (sea), Lamb, Pork, Salmon, Sardines, Seafood, Tuna fish, Turkey (dark)

Kapha: Animal Foods ~ FAVOR
Chicken (white), Eggs, Fish (freshwater), Rabbit, Shrimp, Turkey (white), Venison

Kapha: Animal Foods ~ AVOID
Beef, Buffalo, Chicken (dark), Duck, Fish (sea), Lamb, Pork, Salmon, Sardines, Seafood, Tuna fish, Turkey (dark)

Vata: Condiments ~ FAVOR
Black pepper*, Chutney, mango (sweet or spicy), Chili peppers*, Coriander leaves*, Dulse, Gomasio, Hijiki, Kelp, Ketchup, Lemon, Lime, Lime pickle, Mango pickle, Mayonnaise, Mustard, Pickles, Salt, Scallions, Seaweed, Soy sauce, Sprouts*, Tamari, Vinegar

* okay in moderation

Vata: Condiments ~ AVOID
Chocolate, Horseradish

Pitta: Condiments ~ FAVOR
Black pepper*, Chutney, mango (sweet), Coriander leaves, Dulse*, Hijiki*, Kombu*, Lime*, Sprouts, Tamari*

* okay in moderation

Pitta: Condiments ~ AVOID
Chili pepper, Chocolate, Chutney, mango (spicy), Gomasio, Horseradish, Kelp, Ketchup, Mustard, Lemon, Lime pickle, Mango pickle, Mayonnaise, Pickles, Salt (in excess), Scallions, Seaweed, Soy sauce, Vinegar

Kapha: Condiments ~ FAVOR
Black pepper, Chili peppers, Chutney, mango (spicy), Coriander leaves, Dulse*, Hijiki*, Horseradish, Lemon*, Mustard (without vinegar), Scallions, Seaweed*, Sprouts
* okay in moderation

Kapha: Condiments ~ AVOID
Chocolate, Chutney, mango (sweet), Gomasio, Kelp, Ketchup**, Lime, Lime pickle, Mango pickle, Mayonnaise, Pickles, Salt, Soy sauce, Tamari, Vinegar
** okay rarely

Vata: Nuts ~ FAVOR
In moderation:, Almonds, Black walnuts, Brazil nuts, Cashews, Charole, Coconut, Filberts, Hazelnuts, Macadamia nuts, Peanuts, Pecans, Pine nuts, Pistachios, Walnuts

Vata: Nuts ~ AVOID
None

Pitta: Nuts ~ FAVOR
Almonds (soaked and peeled), Charole, Coconut

Pitta: Nuts ~ AVOID
Almonds (with skin), Black walnuts, Brazil nuts, Cashews, Filberts, Hazelnuts, Macadamia nuts, Peanuts, Pecans, Pine nuts, Pistachios, Walnuts

Kapha: Nuts ~ FAVOR
Charole

Kapha: Nuts ~ AVOID
Almonds (soaked and peeled)**, Black walnuts, Brazil nuts, Cashews, Coconut, Filberts, Hazelnuts, Macadamia nuts, Peanuts, Pecans, Pine nuts, Pistachios, Walnuts
** okay rarely

Vata: Seeds ~ FAVOR
Chia, Flax, Halva, Pumpkin, Sesame, Sunflower, Tahini

Vata: Seeds ~ AVOID
Popcorn, Psyllium**
*** okay rarely*

Pitta: Seeds ~ FAVOR
Flax, Halva, Popcorn (no salt, buttered), Psyllium, Pumpkin*, Sunflower
* okay in moderation

Pitta: Seeds ~ AVOID
Chia, Sesame, Tahini

Kapha: Seeds ~ FAVOR
Chia, Flax*, Popcorn (no salt, no butter), Pumpkin*, Sunflower*
* okay in moderation

Kapha: Seeds ~ AVOID
Halva, Psyllium**, Sesame, Tahini
** okay rarely

Vata: Oils ~ FAVOR
For internal & external use: (most suitable at beginning of list)
Sesame, Ghee, Olive, Most other oils, (Coconut and Avocado best externally only)

Vata: Oils ~ AVOID
Flax seed

Pitta: Oils ~ FAVOR
For internal & external use: (most suitable at beginning of list)
Sunflower, Ghee, Canola, Olive, Soy, Flax seed, Primrose, Walnut
External use only:
Avocado, Coconut

Pitta: Oils ~ AVOID
Almond, Apricot, Corn, Safflower, Sesame

Kapha: Oils ~ FAVOR
For internal & external use in small amounts: (most suitable at beginning of list)
Corn, Canola, Sesame (external), Sunflower, Ghee, Almond

Kapha: Oils ~ AVOID
Avocado, Apricot, Coconut, Flax seed**, Olive, Primrose, Safflower, Sesame (internal), Soy, Walnut
** okay rarely

Vata: Beverages ~ FAVOR
Alcohol (beer, or wine)*, Almond milk, Aloe vera juice, Apple cider, Apricot juice, Berry juice (except for cranberry), Carob*, Carrot juice, Chai (hot spiced milk), Cherry juice, Grain "coffee", Grape juice, Grapefruit juice, Lemonade, Mango juice, Miso broth, Orange juice, Papaya juice,

Peach nectar, Pineapple juice, Rice milk, Sour juices, Soy milk (hot & well-spiced)*, Vegetable bouillon

Herb Teas:
Ajwan, Bancha, Catnip*, Chamomile, Chicory*, Chrysanthemum*, Clove, Comfrey, Elder flower, Eucalyptus, Fennel, Fenugreek, Ginger (fresh), Hawthorne, Juniper berry, Kukicha*, Lavender, Lemon grass, Licorice, Marshmallow, Oat straw, Orange peel, Pennyroyal, Peppermint, Raspberry*, Rosehips, Saffron, Sage, Sarsaparilla, Sassafras, Spearmint, Strawberry*, Wintergreen*

* okay in moderation

Vata: Beverages ~ AVOID
Apple juice, Black tea, Caffeinated beverages, Carbonated drinks, Chocolate milk, Coffee, Cold dairy drinks, Cranberry juice, Iced tea, Icy cold drinks, Pear juice, Pomegranate juice, Prune juice**, Soy milk (cold), Tomato juice**, V-8 juice

** okay rarely

Herb Teas:
Alfalfa**, Barley**, Basil**, Blackberry, Borage**, Burdock, Cinnamon**, Cornsilk, Dandelion, Ginseng, Hibiscus, Hops**, Jasmine**, Lemon balm**, Mormon tea, Nettle**, Passion flower**, Red clover**, Red Zinger**, Violet**, Yarrow, Yerba Mate**

** okay rarely

Pitta: Beverages ~ FAVOR
Alcohol, beer*, Almond milk, Aloe vera juice, Apple juice, Apricot juice, Berry juice (sweet), Black tea*, Carob, Chai (hot, spiced milk)*, Cherry juice (sweet), Cool dairy drinks, Grain "coffee", Grape juice, Mango juice, Miso broth*, Mixed veg. juice, Orange juice*, Peach nectar, Pear juice, Pomegranate juice, Prune juice, Rice milk, Soy milk, Vegetable bouillon

* okay in moderation ** okay rarely

Herb Teas:
Alfalfa, Bancha, Barley, Blackberry, Borage, Burdock, Catnip, Chamomile, Chicory, Dandelion, Comfrey, Dandelion, Fennel, Ginger (fresh), Hibiscus, Hops, Jasmine, Kukicha, Lavender, Lemon balm, Lemon grass, Licorice, Marshmallow, Nettle, Oat Straw, Passion flower, Peppermint, Raspberry, Red clover, Sarsaparilla, Spearmint, Strawberry, Violet, Wintergreen, Yarrow

Pitta: Beverages ~ AVOID
Alcohol (hard or wine), Apple cider, Berry juice (sour), Caffeinated, beverages, Carbonated drinks, Carrot juice, Cherry juice (sour), Chocolate milk, Coffee, Cranberry juice, Grapefruit juice, Iced tea, Icy cold drinks, Lemonade, Papaya juice, Pineapple juice, Tomato juice, V-8 juice, Sour juices

Herb Teas:
Ajwan, Basil**, Clove, Eucalyptus, Fenugreek, Ginger (dry), Ginseng, Hawthorne, Juniper berry, Mormon tea, Pennyroyal, Red Zinger, Rosehip**, Sage, Sassafras, Yerba Mate

** okay rarely

Kapha: Beverages ~ FAVOR
Alcohol (dry wine, red or white), Aloe vera juice, Apple cider, Apple juice*, Apricot juice, Berry juice, Black tea (spiced), Carob, Carrot juice, Chai (hot, spiced milk)*, Cherry juice (sweet), Cranberry juice, Grain "coffee", Grape juice, Mango juice, Peach nectar, Pear juice, Pineapple juice*, Pomegranate juice, Prune juice, Soy milk (hot & well-spiced)

Herb Teas:
Alfalfa, Bancha, Barley, Blackberry, Burdock, Chamomile, Chicory, Cinnamon, Clove, Comfrey*, Dandelion, Fenugreek, Ginger, Ginseng*, Hibiscus, Jasmine, Juniper berry, Kukicha, Lavender, Lemon balm, Lemon grass, Mormon tea, Nettle, Passion flower, Peppermint, Raspberry, Red clover, Sarsaparilla*, Sassafras, Spearmint, Strawberry, Wintergreen, Yarrow, Yerba Mate
* okay in moderation

Kapha: Beverages ~ AVOID
Alcohol (beer, hard, sweet wine), Almond milk, Caffeinated beverages**, Carbonated drinks, Cherry juice (sour), Chocolate milk, Coffee, Cold dairy drinks, Grapefruit juice, Iced tea, Icy cold drinks, Lemonade, Miso broth, Orange juice, Papaya juice, Rice milk, Sour juices, Soy milk (cold), Tomato juice, V-8 juice

Herb Teas:
Licorice**, Marshmallow, Red Zinger, Rosehip**
** okay rarely

Vata: Spices ~ FAVOR
All spices are good!
Ajwan, Allspice, Almond extract, Anise, Asafoetida (hing), Basil, Bay leaf, Black pepper, Cardamom, Cayenne*, Cinnamon, Cloves, Coriander, Cumin, Dill, Fennel, Fenugreek*, Garlic, Ginger, Marjoram, Mint, Mustard seeds, Nutmeg, Orange peel, Oregano, Paprika, Parsley, Peppermint, Pippali, Poppy seeds, Rosemary, Saffron, Salt, Savory, Spearmint, Star anise, Tarragon, Thyme, Turmeric, Vanilla, Wintergreen
* okay in moderation

Vata: Spices ~ AVOID
Caraway

Pitta: Spices ~ FAVOR
Basil (fresh), Black pepper*, Caraway*, Cardamom*, Cinnamon, Coriander, Cumin, Dill, Fennel, Ginger (fresh), Mint, Neem leaves*, Orange peel*, Parsley*, Peppermint, Saffron, Spearmint, Tarragon*, Turmeric, Vanilla*, Wintergreen
* okay in moderation

Pitta: Spices ~ AVOID
Ajwan, Allspice, Almond extract, Anise, Asafoetida (hing), Basil (dry), Bay leaf, Cayenne, Cloves, Fenugreek, Garlic, Ginger (dry), Mace, Marjoram, Mustard seeds, Nutmeg, Oregano, Paprika, Pippali, Ginger, Sage, Salt, Savory, Star anise, Thyme

Kapha: Spices ~ FAVOR
All spices are good!
Ajwan, Allspice, Almond extract, Anise, Asafoetida (hing), Basil, Bay leaf, Black pepper, Caraway, Cardamom, Cayenne, Cinnamon, Cloves, Coriander, Cumin, Dill, Fennel*, Fenugreek, Garlic, Ginger, Marjoram, Mint, Mustard seeds, Neem leaves, Nutmeg, Orange peel, Oregano, Paprika, Parsley, Peppermint, Pippali, Poppy seeds, Rosemary, Saffron, Savory, Spearmint, Tarragon, Thyme, Turmeric, Vanilla*, Wintergreen

* okay in moderation

Kapha: Spices ~ AVOID
Salt

Vata: Sweeteners ~ FAVOR
Barley malt, Fructose, Fruit juice concentrates, Honey, Jaggery, Molasses, Rice syrup, Sucanat, Turbinado

Vata: Sweeteners ~ AVOID
Maple syrup**, White sugar

** okay rarely

Pitta: Sweeteners ~ FAVOR
Barley malt, Fructose, Fruit juice concentrates, Maple syrup, Rice syrup, Sucanat, Turbinado

Pitta: Sweeteners ~ AVOID
White sugar**, Honey**, Jaggery, Molasses

** okay rarely

Kapha: Sweeteners ~ FAVOR
Fruit juice concentrates, Honey (raw, not processed)

Kapha: Sweeteners ~ AVOID
Barley malt, Fructose, Jaggery, Maple syrup, Molasses, Rice syrup, Sucanat, Turbinado, White sugar

Vata: Food Supplements ~ FAVOR
Aloe vera juice*, Bee pollen, Amino acids, Minerals: calcium copper, iron, magnesium, zinc, Royal jelly, Spirolina and blue-green algae, Vitamin A, B, B12, C, D, E

* okay in moderation

Vata: Food Supplements ~ AVOID
Barley green, Brewer's yeast

Pitta: Food Supplements ~ FAVOR
Aloe vera juice, Barley green, Brewer's yeast, Minerals: calcium, magnesium, zinc, Spirolina and

blue-green algae, Vitamin D, E

Pitta: Food Supplements ~ AVOID
Amino acids, Bee pollen**, Royal jelly**, Minerals: copper, iron, Vitamin A, B, B12, C
** okay rarely

Kapha: Food Supplements ~ FAVOR
Aloe vera juice, Amino acids, Barley green, Bee pollen, Brewer's yeast, Minerals: copper, calcium, iron, magnesium, zinc, Royal jelly, Spirolina and blue-green algae, Vitamin A, B, B12, C, D, E

Kapha: Food Supplements ~ AVOID
Minerals: potassium

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Glossary

Astrology – in Ayurveda, the constant happenings in the universe and beyond can have a profound effect on our well being, so a traditional Ayurvedic physician would be trained in astrology and include this in his diagnosis.

Doshas – the three principles which control an organism's health; vata, pitta and kapha.

Five Elements – make up the basic substance of everything on our planet: space, air, fire, water, earth.

Ghee – an edible oil made from unsalted butter that has important medicinal qualities.

Kapha – the one of the three doshas in which water and earth elements predominate.

Panchakarma – the cleansing program to help the body shed toxins in Ayurveda that involves oil massage, sweating, and dietary restrictions.

Pitta – the one of the three doshas in which the elements of fire and water predominate.

Prakriti – refers to an individual's inherent nature fixed at the moment of conception, i.e., the tendencies in each person that influence body and mind, and how they react to stress.

Rajas – the cosmic force of movement and change. Excess amounts in the mind cause it to become overactive and unstable.

Sattva – The cosmic force of equilibrium or balance, which is present in the normal state of a healthy mind.

Three Universal Tendencies – are the cosmic forces of sattva, rajas and tamas, especially important in the spiritual practice of Tantra.

Prana – is like the Ch'i of Chinese medicine. It is the life force or vital energy which activates the body and mind. When prana goes, the person dies.

Pulse – is an important Ayurvedic diagnostic tool for the physician, where s/he can get information on the prakriti of a client and the state of health of the important organs in the body.

Tamas – the cosmic force of non–movement. Too much can cause the mind to become dull and resistant to change and growth.

Tantra – from the root tan, to weave. Traditionally Tantra is about practices which use concentrated and refined energy for spiritual progress.

Vata – the one of the three doshas in which the elements of air and space predominate.

Vedas – the ancient holy books of India, the oldest literary compositions still in existence.

About the Author

Robert E. Svoboda is the first Westerner ever to graduate from a college of Ayurveda (in 1980) and be licensed to practice Ayurveda in India. During and after his formal Ayurvedic training, his mentor, the Aghori Vimalananda, tutored him in Ayurveda, Yoga, Jyotish, Tantra and other forms of classical Indian lore. After moving to India in 1973, he lived there for more than a decade. Since 1985 he has traveled the world lecturing, consulting, teaching and writing. The author of more than a dozen books and audio works, he has served as Adjunct Faculty at the Ayurvedic Institute, Albuquerque, NM, and Bastyr University, Kenmore, WA. To read more about Dr. Svoboda and his travels, visit his website www.drsvoboda.com.

Other Books by Robert E. Svoboda

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